

# DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW AUSTRALIAN PLANTS, WITH OCCASIONAL OTHER ANNOTATIONS ;

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(Continued.)

*ÆSCHYNOMENE ASPERA* ; Linné, sp. plant, 713.

Port Darwin ; N. Holtze.

Under the designation *oligarthra*, a variety of this plant or a closely allied species, as gathered recently by Mr. Holtze jun., can be distinguished from the typical Asiatic and African form in somewhat broader fruits, consisting only of one or two or three pieces, conspicuously crisped at the margin, but not much asperous at the sides ; moreover the corolla of the Australian plant is hardly beset with any hairlets, while the lower petals along the outer margin are rigidulously fringed, which reminds of what Wight and Arnott stated in this respect about *A. Surattensis*. Our plant needs yet further study in free nature.

*SWAINSONA CYCLOCARPA*.

Laxe, scantily beset with very short hairlets ; leaves generally 5-7 foliolate ; leaflets from cuneate- to obcordate-ovate ; flowers several in each raceme, rather small, on very short stalklets ; lobes of the calyx semilanceolar-deltoid, shorter than the tube ; petals glabrous, upwards violet or lilac-coloured, the lower almost semiorbicular, blunt, hardly longer than the two lateral petals ; style imperfectly ciliolate at the inner side towards the upper end, pectinate behind the stigma ; fruit comparatively small, hippocrepic- or annular-curved, undular- and rugular-asperous, glabrescent, turgid, devoid of a conspicuous stipe, long-pointed at the apex, imperfectly bilocular by intrusion of the valves from the upper suture ; seeds several, brownish.

Near the Macdonell-Ranges ; Rev. W. F. Schwartz.

Plant about one foot long, slender-rooted and therefore perhaps annual, although the specimens obtained may represent first year's seedlings only. Leaflets  $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 inch long. Stipules sometimes considerably enlarged, but often small. Calyx hardly above  $\frac{1}{6}$  inch long. Petals measuring about  $\frac{1}{3}$  inch in length, the upper without very conspicuous callosities and all without twists. Fruits nearly or fully 1 inch long, but from its strong curvature appearing to be much shorter, scarcely  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick, lacunous-foveolar and with sharp prominences, pale, seemingly indehiscent. Seeds shining when well matured, smooth.

This species is singularly well marked by the almost circularly curved peculiarly rugulous fruit. In some respects it approaches *S. brachycarpa*, in others *S. oligophylla* and *S. occidentalis*. Dr.

Wawra described in the "Oesterr. Bot. Zeitschrift" of 1881, at page 69, a Swainsona as *S. murrayana* from the northern regions of our colony.

GEOCOCCUS PUSILLUS; J. Drummond and Harvey.

In calcareous and sandy desert-localities from West-Australia to the Murray- and Lachlan-Rivers.

This remarkable plant is mentioned here, to draw attention to the possibility, as indicated already by Bentham, that it may be the stemless state, fruiting sparsely underground, of a plant developing otherwise, like most Cruciferae, its stem, inflorescence and fruits in the ordinary manner. Its foliage is not unlike the radical leaves of *Sisymbrium cardaminoides*, with which it is moreover not rarely associated. Indeed a Brazilian Cardamine of ordinary habit has been shown by Grisebach many years ago (in "Abhandlungen der Akademie von Goettingen"), to produce occasionally an abnormal state, resembling much our *Geococcus*, from the same root. But although the Italian *Morisia hypogæa* is in external appearance also very much like our *Geococcus pusillus*, that plant has never yet been traced to a stage of higher development, and seems therefore not to have arisen from mere dimorphism.

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## A WESTERN FOREST.

BY A MEMBER OF THE CLUB.

(Read before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, 16th November, 1891.)

"THE troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," is the very embodiment of an evil spirit; the mountains are the emblem of lofty grandeur and strength; the rolling plain or the lake—the eye of the landscape, it is said—possesses a soft, inexpressible loveliness, more noticeable, perhaps, in the receding distance; the desert mourns of melancholy and utter desolation. But what an irresistible charm there is within the holy precincts of a forest—truly "the visible living garment" of Infinite Nature! Except when devoid of poetical emotion (though if present, perhaps, unutterable), who has not experienced the divinity of a forest, or felt as if God were nearer in the forest than in any other works of His creation? Have not some of our poets endeavoured to touch but the hem of this living garment, if, haply, they might be imbued with its spirit? Yes, they have